



# Near Northside Master Plan

Waco, Texas



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many individuals who gave their time and wisdom to the preparation of this document.

Listed below are the names of individuals who participated in the numerous stakeholder meetings and neighborhood planning meetings. Without these individuals input none of this would have been possible.

Chad Klawetter	Bill Whitaker
Jerrold Clark	Erin Venable
Caroleen Meza de Clark	Kenneth Moerbe
Naomi Mangum	McKenzie Miller
Diamanté Maya	Shannon Williams
Jim Vaughn	Sharon Hopwood
Mike Stone	Nancy Gatlin
Robert Jackson	Bethany Smith
Milton Talbert Jr.	Phillip Bridgewater
Andreia Foster	Ralph Cooper
Joe Gatlin	Billy Davis
Jimmy Dorrell	Roane Lacy
Jerry L Martin Sr.	Toni Herbert
Samuel Batisti	Larry Groth
John Alexander	Josh Lawson
Clement Milam	Mary Greenwald
Rerhetrius	Jenifer Reiner
Christina Wilson	Norman Hogue
Steven Autry	

## Table of Contents

Neighborhood Vision . . . . .	6
Existing Conditions . . . . .	14
Neighborhood Analysis . . . . .	26
Neighborhood Improvement Recommendations . . . . .	32
Implementation Strategies . . . . .	50



# Near Northside Master Plan

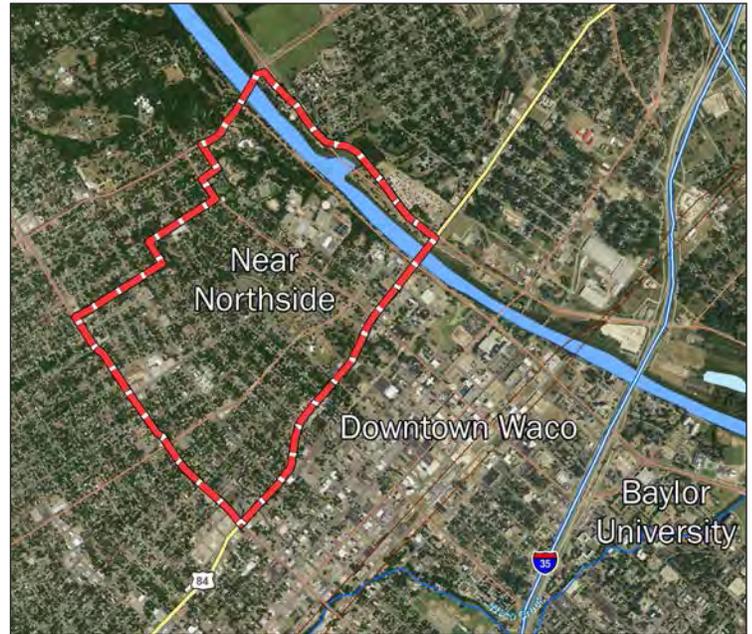
---

Neighborhood Vision

## Introduction

The Near Northside is located on the north west edge of downtown Waco and is one of the largest neighborhoods within the greater downtown area. It encompasses almost all of the Brook Oaks neighborhood and a portion of the Sanger Heights neighborhood.

The area was once home to some of Waco's grandest homes and there are still a significant number of historic homes in the area especially in the southwest corner of the region, which lies mostly within the Sanger Heights neighborhood. However as with many inner-city or downtown adjacent neighborhoods, the movement towards newer suburban developments on the urban fringe of Waco enticed many residents to move out to newer and often larger homes. As the neighborhood transitioned many of the older homes fell into disrepair and were boarded up as they were found to be unfit for occupancy, which eventually lead to many of the homes being demolished for excessive code violations. This has created a large number of vacant lots, nearly 20% of the total property acreage, which is both a blessing and a curse.



In the 1990's and 2000's crime within the area began to rise especially around the Parkside Village and The Villages Apartments where more than 900 calls for service were placed annually ranging from drive-by-shootings to criminal trespass to prostitution. In fact the area had gained a reputation as being the most violent, drug infested part of the city. In recent years crime has begun to drop dramatically in the area due to the Waco Police Department and its Playing it S.A.F.E. program and the closure of the Parkside Village Apartment Complex at the corner of 9th and Colcord. As is shown in the chart below incidents of crime have dropped dramatically since the closure of the apartment complex and remain near the neighborhood average for the City of Waco.

Over the last five or so years people have begun to move back to the neighborhood and the region has gained some momentum towards positive change especially near the intersection of 15th and Colcord. The abundance of vacant lots, low-priced housing and the work being done by the Waco



CDC have brought new homeowners to the region and contributed greatly to the changing momentum. Recognizing that the Near Northside revitalization has begun community leaders retained Gideon Toal to develop a Master Plan and Implementation Strategy to guide the revitalization process and lay the framework for continued positive change in the community.

## Planning Process

Over the past year Gideon Toal has worked closely with community leaders and neighborhood groups to develop a plan that builds upon the community's vision for the future of the Near Northside. Following an initial kick-off meeting the planning team began to immerse themselves in the neighborhood by examining the neighborhood, creating a photo log, gathering data and analyzing the physical form of the community. Following the initial research phase the planning team facilitated a visioning session at a neighborhood meeting in West Avenue Elementary School. During the visioning session community members walked through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis and outlined a common vision for what the neighborhood should look like in the next 20 years.

After gaining unique insight into issues in the neighborhood the planning team worked to understand the complexities of the neighborhood and identify other cities and neighborhoods in Texas that have experienced a similar type of rejuvenation that the Near Northside is hoping to encourage. After our state wide scan we settled on two North Texas neighborhoods; the Bishop Arts District in Dallas and Magnolia Avenue in Fort Worth's Southside neighborhood. While there are many differences between the case study areas and the Near Northside, there are enough similarities to gain insight into the processes that could be applied to the Near Northside.

Following a second neighborhood input meeting the planning team began to visualize what physical changes the neighborhood would need to go through to meet the community's vision for the future.

Finally, a series of sketches, character images and implementation strategies were developed to encourage community members to visualize what the neighborhood could look like in the future and provide a framework for achieving the community vision.

The following pages seek to provide an overview of the current conditions in the community, outline the vision that has been developed by community members, illustrate the potential for the community and outline implementation strategies that will help to achieve the community's goals.



The initial planning phase encompassed extensive research of the existing conditions within the neighborhood including understanding how vacant lots will impact future development patterns.



The second phase began with the planning team working to understand how physical features in the community would affect revitalization efforts.



The last phase concluded with the creation of a series of sketches and diagrams that created a visual representation of what a potential community wide redevelopment could look like.

## Imagine Waco - A Plan for Greater Downtown Waco

The Greater Downtown Waco Plan was finalized in January of 2011 and provides an extensive look into the community’s vision for the Greater Downtown area which includes the Near Northside, Baylor University and the communities north of the Brazos River. A key action step outlined within the plan is the revitalization of downtown neighborhoods such as the Near Northside Area. The authors of the Downtown Plan and Community leaders recognize the important role that downtown neighborhoods play in the revitalization of downtown, and it is the goal of the Near Northside Master Plan in conjunction with the Imagine Waco Plan, to provide a detailed guide to achieve the ultimate vision of a vibrant city center where diverse groups of people can live, work and play.



**Actions to Achieve the Vision**

**7. Encourage Neighborhood Revitalization**

Reaching Greater Downtown Waco’s goal of 100,000 residents will require appropriate infill in the adjacent neighborhoods as well as growth in the urban core. The key aspect of these neighborhoods will be accessibility, both within the Greater Downtown and to the city’s overall transportation network. Over time, nearby main streets and major arterial streets will be enhanced with sidewalks, bike lanes and better transit service. These corridors will also provide shops, restaurants and other amenities within walking distance of neighborhoods. Great neighborhoods require the creation of attractive, affordable, and desirable housing opportunities. Increasing homeownership opportunities will also provide neighborhood stability and personal investment in these residential areas.

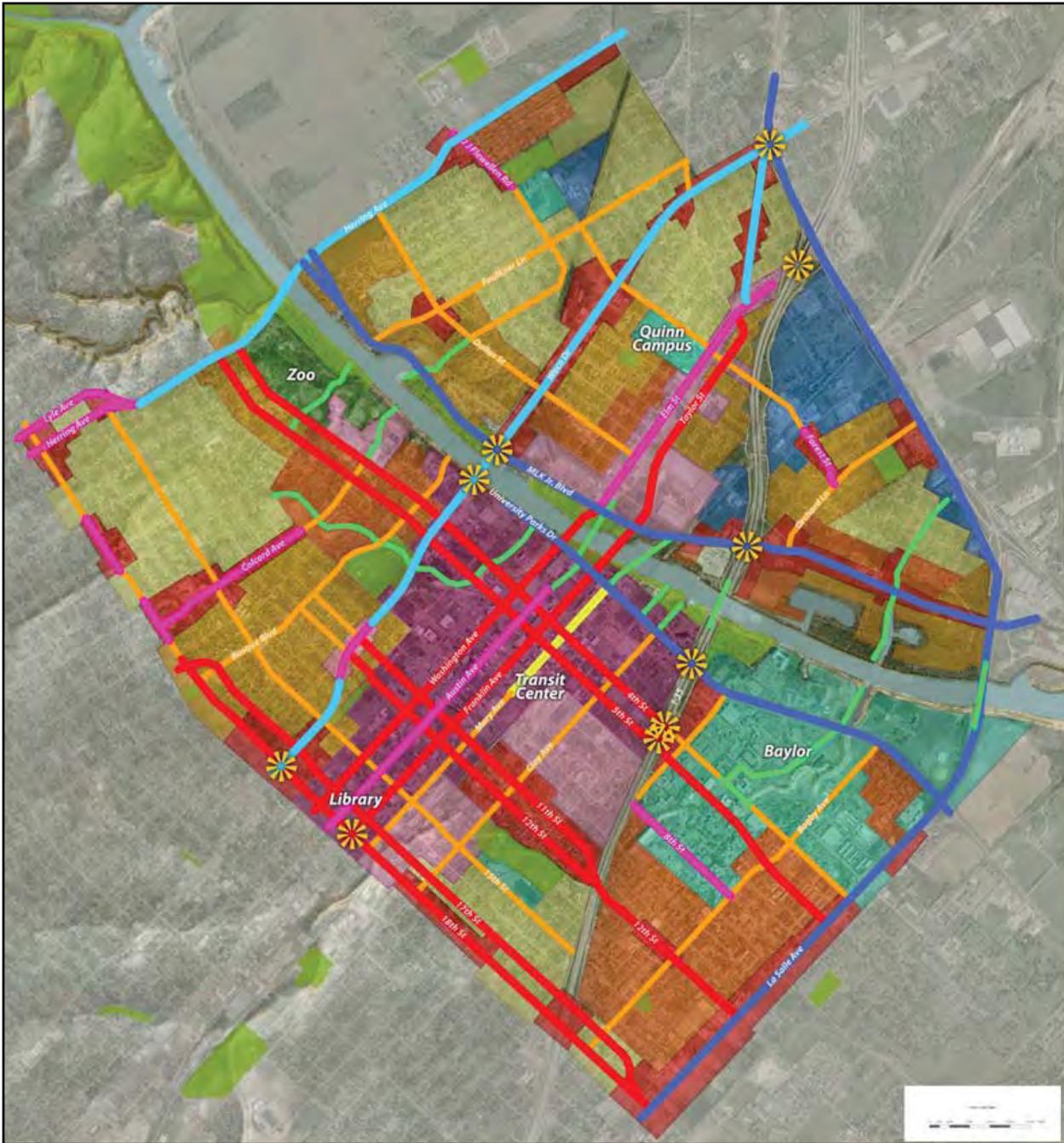
\* Excerpt from the Imagine Waco Greater Downtown Plan

Visualizations are used to help “see” the impacts of land use and urban design on Waco’s streetscapes.



\* Excerpt from the Imagine Waco Greater Downtown Plan intersection shown is 15th and Colcord

LAND USES	STREET TYPOLOGIES
Mixed-Use Core	Gateways
Mixed-Use Flex	Urban Boulevard
Mixed-Use Commercial	Multimodal Arterial
Office/Industrial Flex	Multimodal Couplets
City Neighborhood	Main Street
Traditional Neighborhood	Festival Street
Single-Family Neighborhood	Neighborhood Streets
Schools and Universities	Bike/Ped Connections
Parks and Open Space	Water Taxi
	Potential Grid Connections



\* Excerpt from the Imagine Waco Greater Downtown Plan

Working with key stakeholders and neighborhood residents to understand the community’s vision created a strong foundation for the planning process. In a series of community meetings neighborhood residents documented the Strength’s and Weaknesses of the neighborhood as it exists today and the Opportunities and Threats the community faces in the coming years.

A large number of these comments hit on six key themes that community residents felt were most important (see below). From these key themes we were able to create a community vision statement that guided the planning process.

**Vision Statement**

“The Near Northside area will be revitalized as a diverse, stable neighborhood with a low crime rate, thriving local business environment, improved infrastructure, beautiful historic homes and complementary new homes.”



**Goals of the Study/Neighborhood Vision**

- Create balance and stability  
Balance business and residential uses in the neighborhood while providing a stabilizing force.
- Improve safety and perception of crime  
Make the neighborhood safe for all including school children and change the larger community’s perception of the area.
- Improve business viability  
Help to create a vibrant community that attracts small businesses, artisans and ethnic restaurants
- Beautification and infrastructure improvements  
Recommend improvements to streetscapes, road ways, home design (uniformity of architecture) and multi-modal transportation infrastructure.
- Economic development and funding  
Find funding to promote and entice new development and redevelopment opportunities in the area.
- Promote diversity throughout the neighborhood  
Including racial, income, business, housing, school population and economic diversity.

**Strengths:**

- Diversity
- Old housing stock/Architecture
- Schools
- Location to Downtown, the Brazos River, Cameron Park and Zoo
- Parks
- Mission Waco, CDC, Non-Profits
- Existing neighborhood businesses
- Synergy
- Community character
- Neighborhood rebounding/positive momentum
- Cultural diversity
- Sense of hope
- Strong committed schools & institutions (churches, family practice)
- Beautiful old trees green
- Vacant land for neighborhood amenities
- Economic diversity
- Affordable
- Unique restaurants
- Civic organizations (non-profit)
- Sense of community is important
- Architecture
- Attractive property for young people
- Restaurants
- Viable infrastructure in place

**Weaknesses:**

- Old infrastructure
- Old housing stock
- Absentee landlords
- Weak code enforcement
- Drugs, prostitution & graffiti
- Metropolitan Apartments (Vacant)
- Camp fire
- Lack of clear plan
- Lack of living wage jobs
- No post office
- Streets are bad/alleys
- Lack of walkable sidewalks
- Lack of lighting
- Crime with a capital C
- Lack of neighborhood services/retail
- Large amount of rental properties/transitional housing
- Concentrated poverty
- Pawn shops/predatory lending
- Neighborhoods tend to be ignored
- Diversity – Segregation
- Safety Perception and Reality
- Inability to control businesses ex. liquor store
- Lacking sense of hope/value
- Scary dogs
- Few finances for restoration

**Opportunities:**

- Vacant Land
- Good schools
- Potential for a international baccalaureate school
- Traffic on streets
- More mixed income
- Enhance existing businesses
- Good real estate prices
- Community involvement
- Family practice
- Parkside apartments
- Jubilee theatre
- Sanger school
- Jobs and schools
- Vacant buildings, architecture
- Organizations & churches
- School for spreading information
- Opportunities for the involvement with change
- Amphitheater

**Threats:**

- Apathy
- Economy
- Perception + Stigma
- Economic expansion moving toward suburbs
- Disinvestment
- Arsonists
- Drugs
- Prostitution
- Loud music
- Gangs
- Large community indifference
- Foreclosures
- Abundance of single parent households
- Low wages
- Garbage
- Gentrification
- Forgetting to communicate with the community
- Feeling voiceless



# Near Northside Master Plan

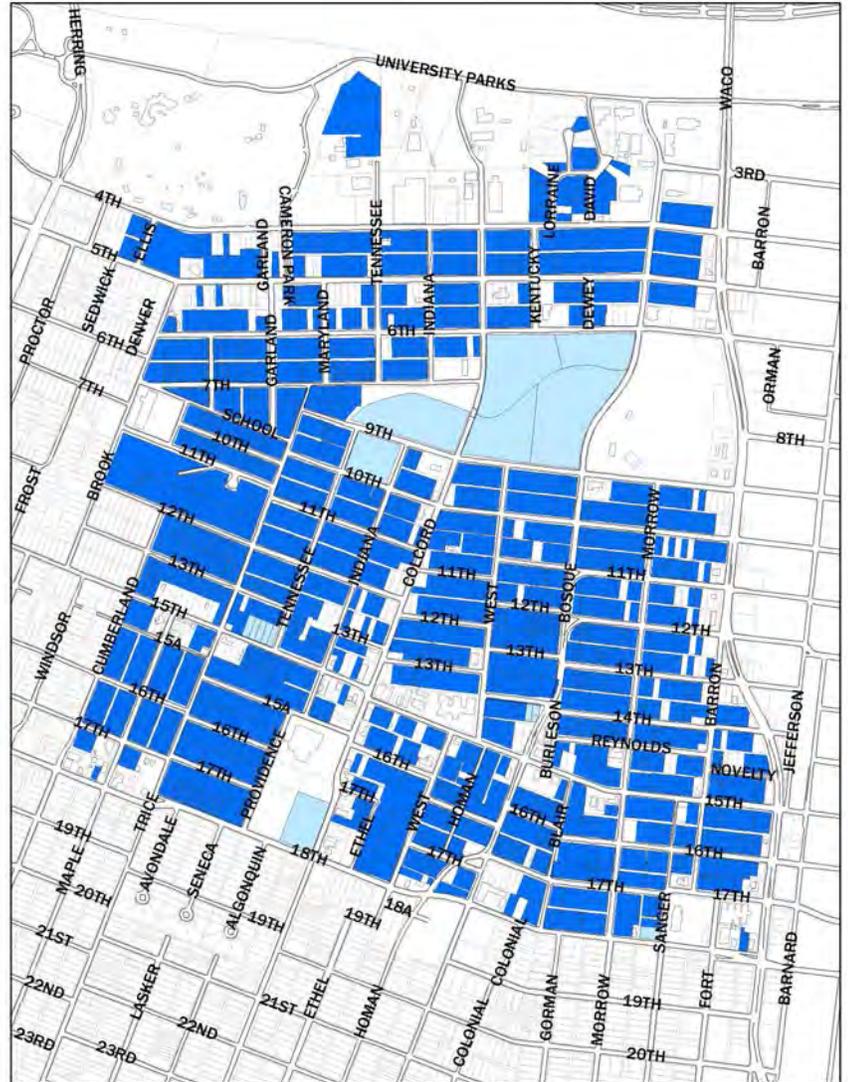
---

Existing Conditions

## Residential

As is shown in the image to the right, the vast majority of the property within the Near Northside is residential in nature. The quality of the homes tends to vary block-to-block with some historic homes in the Sanger Heights area. The vast majority of the properties however tend to be smaller aging detached single family homes.

There are relatively few multifamily residential buildings within the area, and with the closure of Parkside Village the only multifamily facilities are Brook Oaks Senior Residences at 18th and Colcord and the Villages Apartments at 9th and Bosque.



Residential Land Use Map (light blue represents Multi-Family)

## Residential

Homes throughout the neighborhood tend to fall into four general categories. Large historic homes that are in various condition, small aging homes that tend to be dilapidated or in need of significant repair, homes that have been boarded up and vacated and new homes most of which were constructed by the Waco Community Development Corporation.

The historic homes tend to be clustered in the Sanger Heights neighborhood (lower right hand corner of the residential land use map). Some of the homes remain in pristine condition, some are in need of serious repair and others have been converted to multiunit dwellings.

The largest proportion of homes in the neighborhood, especially those north of 15th and west of Colcord, are smaller aging homes that are often in need of serious repair. These homes tend to be renter occupied and have a appraised value of well under \$60,000.

Throughout the Near Northside there are a significant, but diminishing number of vacant homes that have been boarded up due to code violations. While these properties tend to increase the stigma associated with the neighborhood, once they are demolished they provide further opportunity for redevelopment.

Lastly, there are a number of new homes within the region most of which have been constructed by the Waco Community Development Corporation. These homes are spread throughout the community and are generally the only new construction projects that have been undertaken in the area with the exception of the New Waco Community Health Center Expansion and the Brooks Oaks Senior Residences.



Typical vacant/boarded up home within the Near Northside



A well kept historic home within the community.



New home constructed by the Waco Community Development Corporation

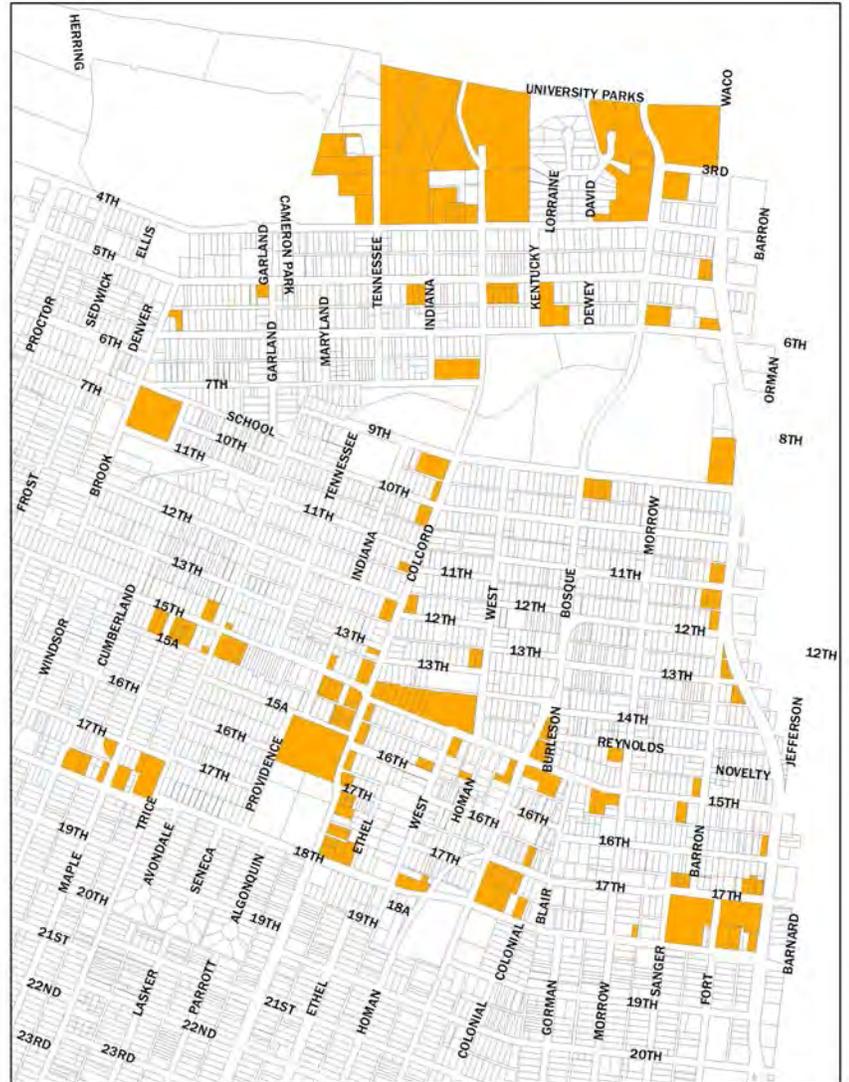


Typical small aging home in the Near Northside

**Commercial**

While there is a variety of commercial development within the Near Northside the area remains dominated by residential development.

Commercial development is congregated along Colcord, 15th, 18th and along US 84 with some small establishments interspersed throughout the neighborhood. Additionally, there is a large City owned commercial facility adjacent to the Brazos River and Cameron park.



Commercial Land Use Map

**Commercial**

Commercial property in the Near Northside is currently comprised of mostly retail and service oriented businesses. Businesses throughout the Near Northside exhibit a very different character depending on their location.

Along US 84 (Waco Drive) there are a number of auto repair and small auto sales businesses along with a few pawn shops, convenience stores and fast food restaurants. All of the structures tend to be aging and were designed mostly with the automobile in mind with large parking lots in front of small buildings which are set at the back of the property.

Commercial property along 18th is focused along the intersections of crossing streets and tends to be smaller family owned restaurants and convenience stores. The street is much narrower than US 84 and has a much more residential feel as some of the properties are residential in nature.

Along Colcord and 15th the majority of commercial properties are restaurants with the notable exception of the Family Health Center. Some of the buildings, most notably the World Cup Cafe, are pedestrian oriented with the front of the building at the edge of the property line. However, some of the buildings are oriented with their entrance along side streets putting the service and delivery side of the building along Colcord.

Lastly, commercial along 4th street is dominated by the City owned facilities. The other main commercial property in the area is comprised of the offices of The Dwyer Group.



The World Cup Cafe located at the intersection of 15th and Colcord



D's Mediterranean Grill across the street from the World Cup Cafe



City of Waco owned commercial facility located between 4th street and the River



Commercial development along Colcord.



**Vacant Property**

While vacant land reaching nearly 20% is a large number for any neighborhood, it presents both a threat to the current stability of the area and an opportunity for future development.

Many of the vacant lots throughout the neighborhood have overgrown trees and weeds which contributes to the negative stigma that is often associated with the area. Additionally, the vacant lots are an underutilized resource that are not only a drain on City resources through the cutting of trees and mowing of gras, but the properties are not being utilized to their full economic potential which reduces the tax base for the City.

The majority of the vacant properties are sites that formerly had a home on them and will most likely remain detached single family homes in the future. There are however some vacant parcels along Colcord and between 4th and 6th street that would be ideal for a more dense mixed-use type of development.



Typical vacant/boarded up home within the Near Northside



Vacant lot with trash gathering in the grass



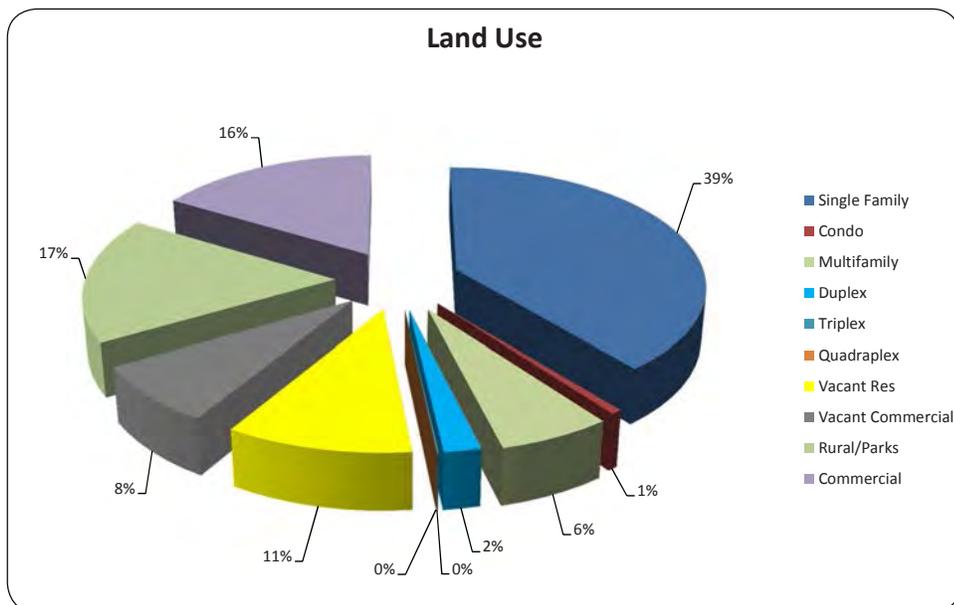
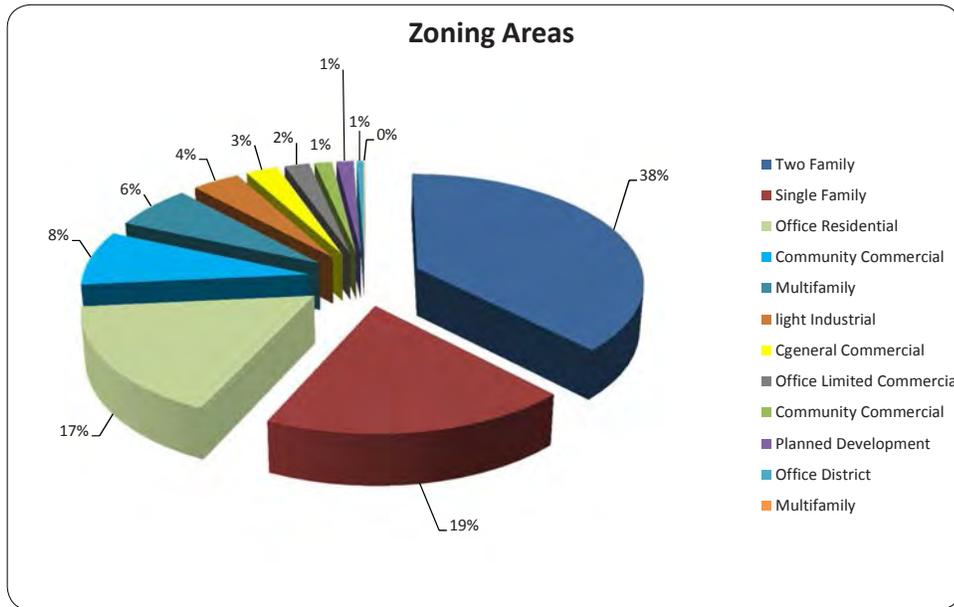
Generally well kept vacant lot



Vacant lot with downed tree limbs

## Zoning

Current zoning in the area hasn't changed in a number of years and doesn't mesh with the current uses or with the communities vision for the area. As was shown on the residential land use map earlier, and is shown in the Land Use chart below, the vast majority of the land is comprised of detached single family housing. The majority of the property by contrast is zoned Two-Family despite less than four percent of the land use fitting into that category.





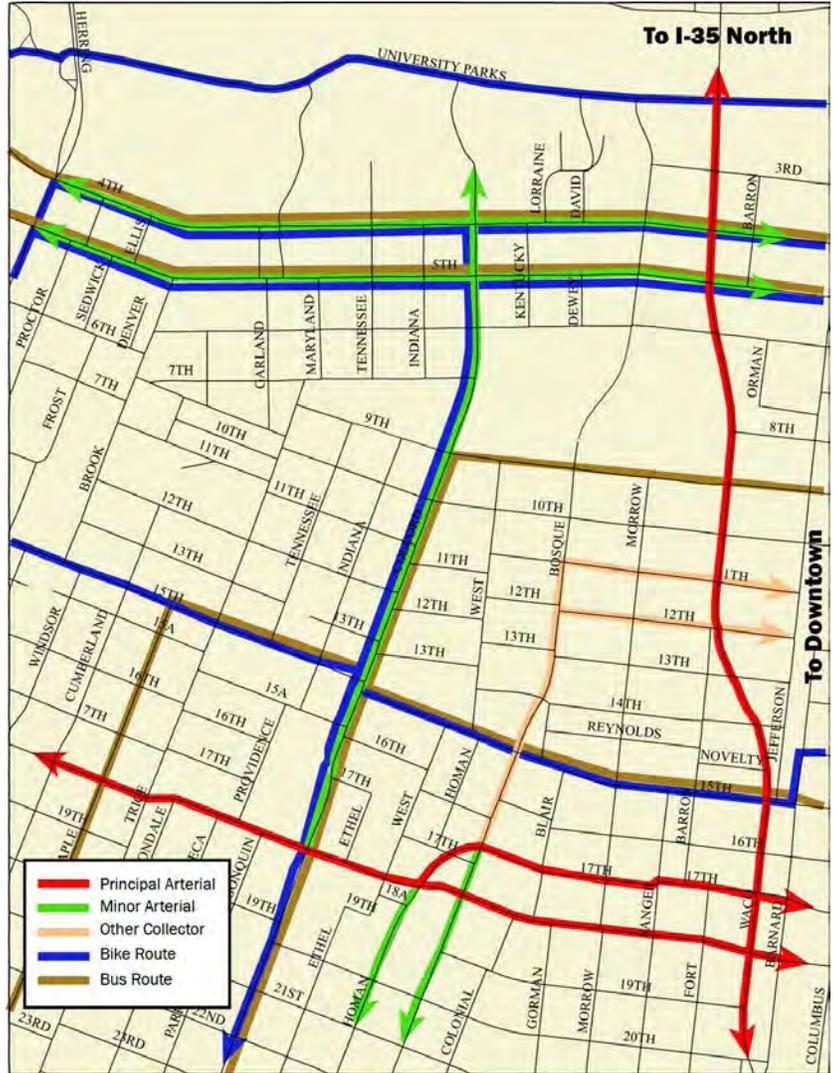
### Transportation Networks

The Near Northside has a more than adequate transportation system with extensive roadways, and multiple bus routes. All of the roads appear to be able to accommodate significantly increased traffic loads with little to no impact to the current system.

There are multiple bus routes throughout the neighborhood with two routes crossing at the 15th and Colcord intersection. The Waco Transit System buses operate on a flag stop system so their are fewer traditional bus stop locations.

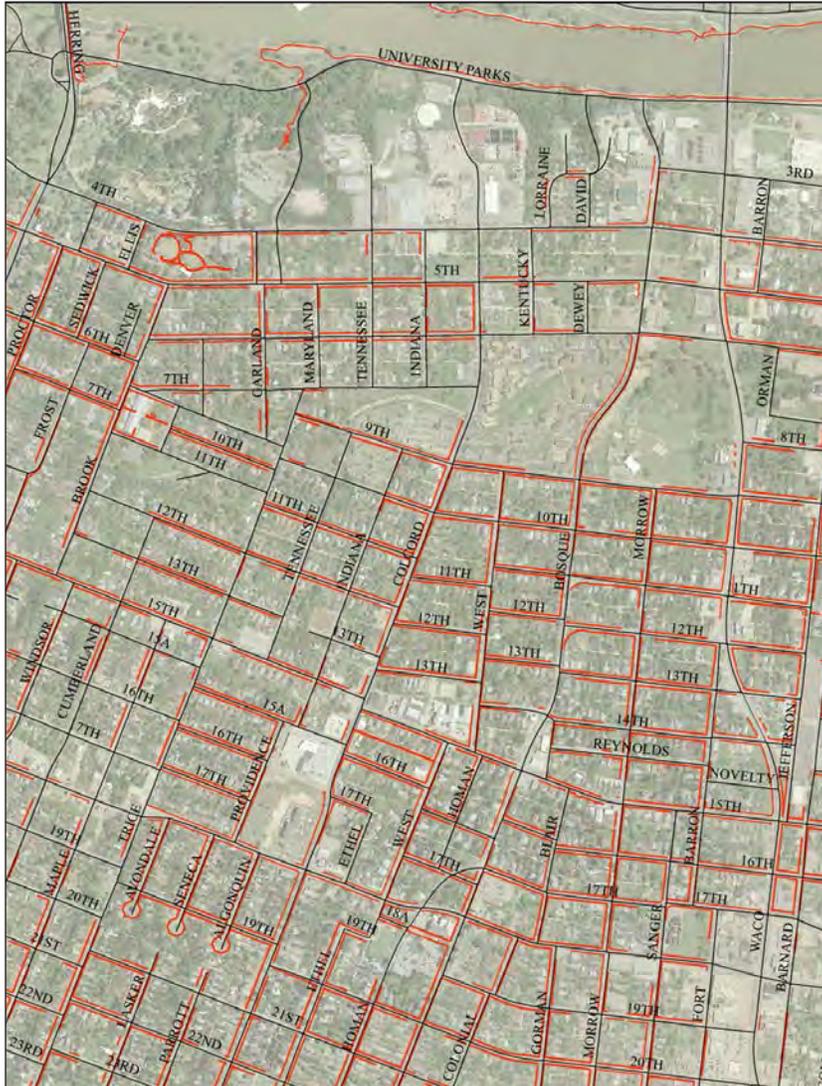
Additionally 15th street, Colcord, and the 4th/5th street corridor are designated bike routes however there are no dedicated bike lanes.

### Transportation Networks



Typical Neighborhood Road

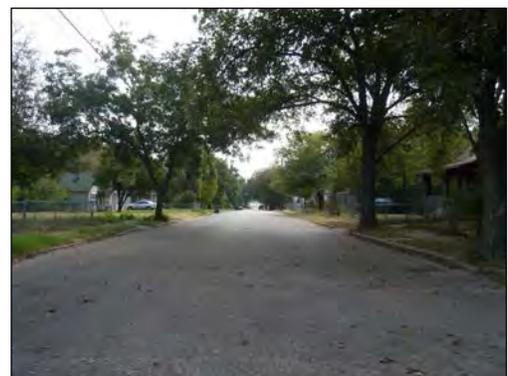
Sidewalks/Pedestrian Networks



Sidewalks/Pedestrian Networks

While nearly all of the blocks have sidewalks, few if any blocks actually have full continuous sidewalks surrounding the entire block. This makes traveling by foot in the neighborhood more dangerous as people are more likely to walk in the street when sidewalk infrastructure is intermittent.

Additionally, the majority of the sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the street with few barriers between the pedestrian and automobile traffic.



Typical non-continuous sidewalk



# Near Northside Master Plan

---

## Neighborhood Analysis

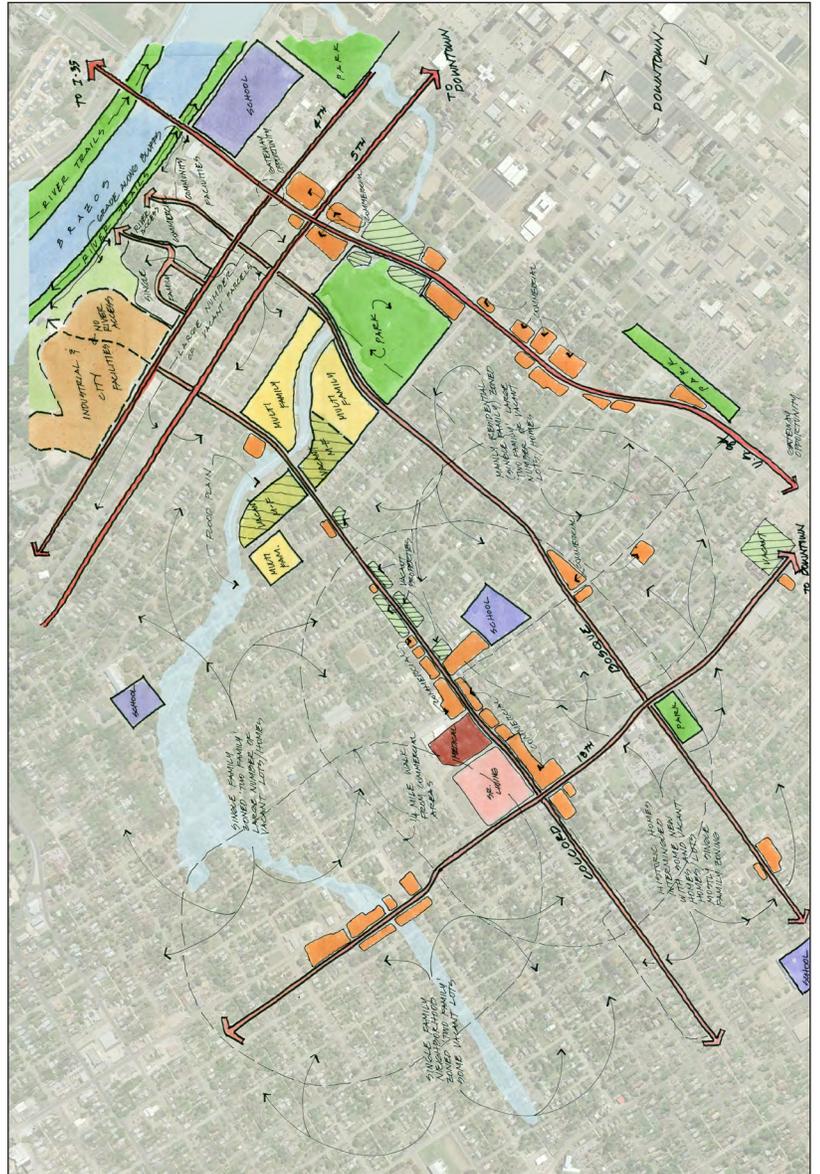
## Neighborhood Analysis

While the existing conditions analysis looked at the physical aspects of the neighborhood, the neighborhood analysis looked into how the different areas interact with one another and how the physical form of the land has shaped the development of the neighborhood.

When traveling through the Near Northside it becomes apparent that there are certain boundaries that delineate the region from other nearby neighborhoods. US 84 is the most obvious boundary to the neighborhood due to the higher speed traffic and continuous five lane width. Additionally, 18th street is clearly identifiable boundary to the neighborhood as it is a principal arterial within the thoroughfare plan and is one of the main routes west from Downtown Waco.

While 18th and US 84 define one side of the Near Northside Boundary, the remainder of the area is split into three areas by two main boundaries. The first major boundary within the neighborhood is the Parkside Villages and the Villages apartment complexes. These two fairly large apartment complexes create a barrier that after it is passed, feels like you have entered a different neighborhood. The second major boundary is the 4th and 5th street corridor. With both streets one way with two extremely wide lanes with on street parking, this road discourages crossing over to the river especially for pedestrians.

Outside of the aforementioned barriers, overall movement within the neighborhood is fairly efficient for automobile travel and public transit, less than adequate for bicycles and poor for pedestrians.



Neighborhood Analysis Sketch

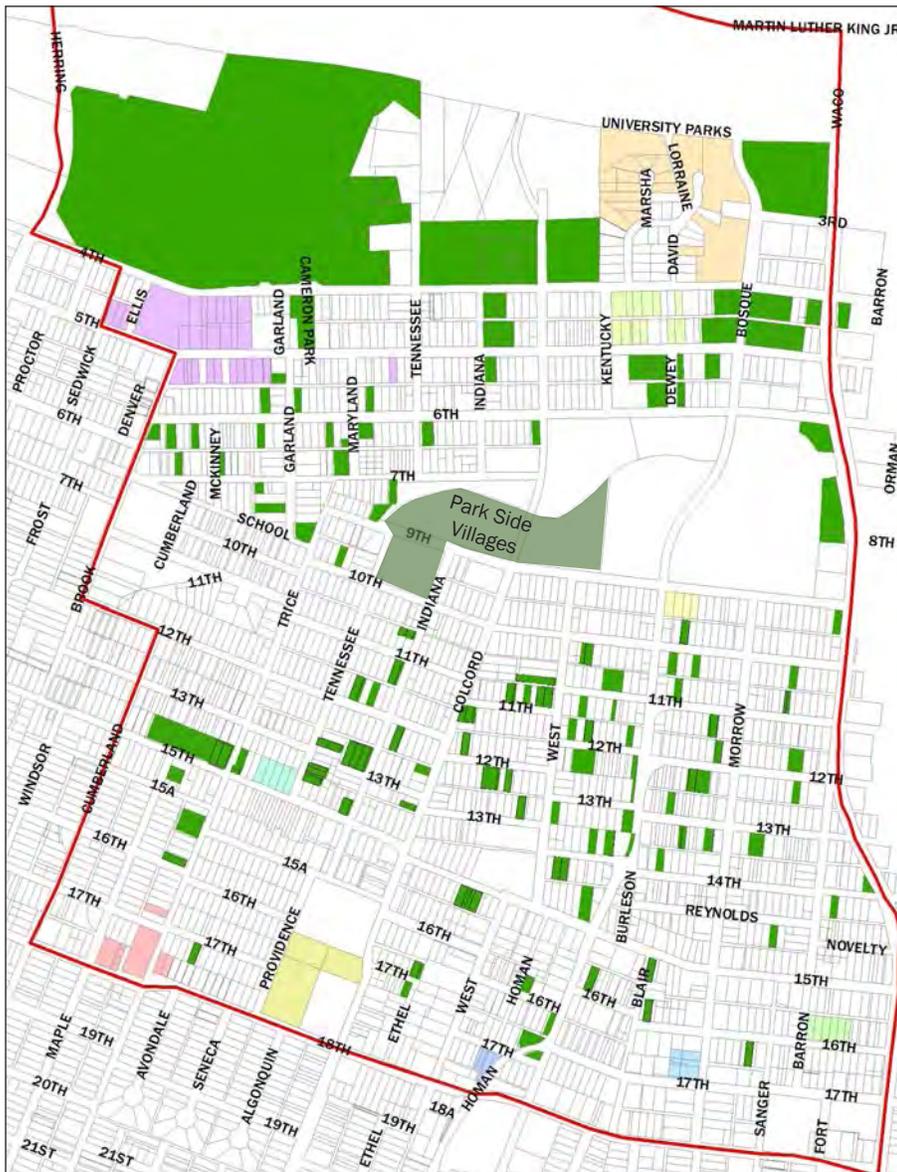
## Property Ownership

An important aspect to neighborhood revitalization efforts in an aging single-family dominated part of town such as the Near Northside is identifying property ownership. Land acquisition within older neighborhoods is one of the most time-consuming and risky investments within the real estate industry. It takes significant time to work with a large number of individual home-owners to acquire enough land to facilitate an adequate return on investment. That being said, the area does have a few clusters of land that are owned by a single individual or entity.

The first thing that becomes readily apparent when looking at the map below is that the City of Waco, which includes the Waco CDC, owns a significant amount of property within the neighborhood. While the property north of 4th street is a heavily used industrial style facility, the majority of the other property is either vacant or has an aging single family home on the structure. The City's ownership within this region is a great asset for developing new detached single family residences, but due to the nature of the way the properties were acquired, there are few contiguous parcels that could support larger scale redevelopment efforts.

Outside of the City of Waco property ownership there are very few individuals or entities that own a significant amount of land in the area with only the GH Pape foundation, the Dwyer Group and The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) owning enough land to undertake significant revitalization efforts.

Moving forward it will be important to work closely with the entities mentioned above to foster positive redevelopment while working to acquire larger contiguous parcels that provide the opportunity for catalyst projects.



Ownership Clusters Map

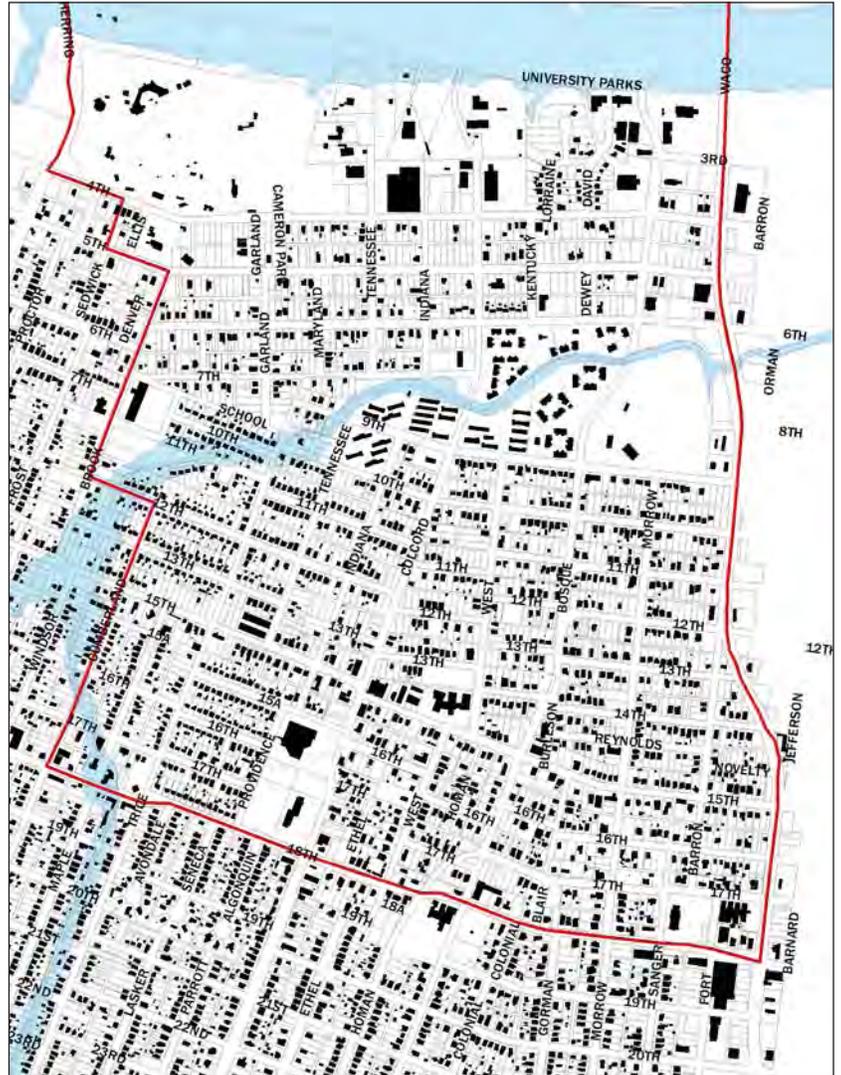
100 - Year Flood Plain

**100 - Year Flood Plain**

A significant portion of the Near Northside lies within the 100 - Year Flood Plain making portions of the neighborhood prone to flooding.

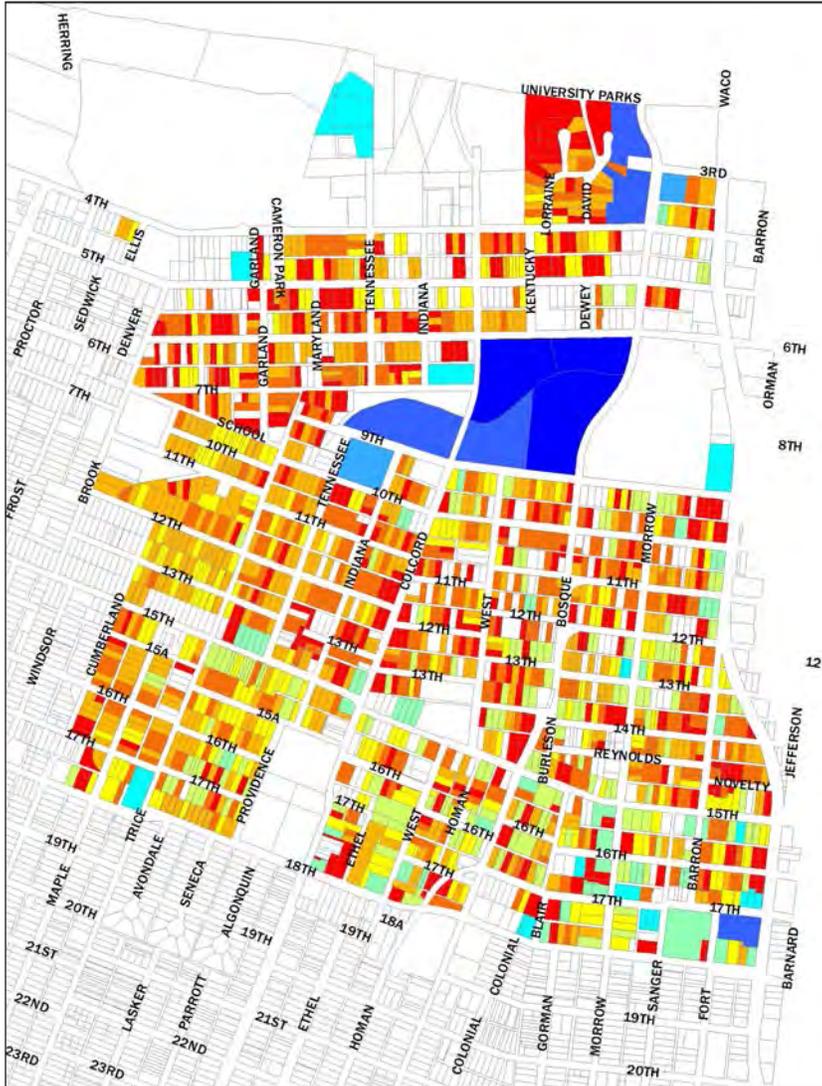
Currently only a portion of the flood plain is undeveloped near the Parkside Villages and The Villages apartments. By the Parkside Village there is a concrete lined channel to attempt and help control the flow of water while the area separating The Villages and Parkside Village is unimproved and appears to have some erosion issues.

The remainder of the flood plain is comprised of detached single family housing similar to the majority of the neighborhood.



View of the 100 - Year flood plain as it moves near the Parkside Villages Apartments

Taxable Value Analysis



**Current Land Use**

White	Tax Exempt Property
Red	\$0.00 - \$10,721.00
Orange	\$10,721.01 - \$25,138.00
Yellow-Orange	\$25,138.01 - \$38,245.00
Yellow	\$38,245.01 - \$55,924.00
Light Green	\$55,924.01 - \$83,231.00
Green	\$83,231.01 - \$125,033.00
Cyan	\$125,033.01 - \$219,282.00
Blue-Cyan	\$219,282.01 - \$647,210.00
Blue	\$647,210.01 - \$1,553,327.00
Dark Blue	\$1,553,327.01 - \$4,373,708.00

Taxable Value Analysis

The majority of property within the Near Northside is valued at \$55,000 and below. That is more than \$40,000 less than the average Waco home value of ~\$96,000 as of 2010.

This significant under-performance of housing values within the area is an extreme drag on the City’s finances, but accurately represents the large number of vacant lots and abandoned houses within the region.

Moving forward it will be important to help the value of real estate rise in the region without displacing current residents.



Abandoned house within the neighborhood



# Near Northside Master Plan

---

Neighborhood Improvement Recommendations

### Near Northside Neighborhood Character

The Near Northside neighborhoods are comprised of a diverse group of families and businesses that recognize the importance of diversity and seek to build on the eclectic character of their neighborhood. It is in that vein that we have developed a master plan and neighborhood improvement recommendations to focus on continuing to build upon the transitional momentum within the neighborhood.

There are a couple of catalyst projects already under way or in the advanced planning stages including the pedestrian friendly intersection improvements at 15th and Colcord, an expansion to the Family Health Center and the new residential development The Heights at Cameron Park along Bosque between 4th and 5th street. The following pages outlining, the potential character of the neighborhood residents have expressed they would like to strive for as well as a number of public and private improvements that will contribute to the sustainable revitalization of the Near Northside.



Near North Side Master Plan Potential Redevelopment Scenario

### Near Northside Neighborhood Character

As mentioned previously the Near Northside has begun to establish momentum related to the revitalization efforts, much of which is due to the number of events that are now being held annually within the region.

One of the first major events held in the Near Northside recently was the Better Blocks Project which was spearheaded by the Waco Chamber and Mission Waco. In the weeks leading up to the event residents and volunteers teamed up to fix up buildings within the neighborhood by removing trash, repainting and providing minor repair work to show their commitment to the neighborhood.

At the conclusion of the improvements to the block a street party was thrown to celebrate the improvements and provide a fun outdoor escape for all of the citizens of Waco.

Other events currently take place throughout the year within the near Northside including plays at Jubilee Theatre as well as the Cultural Night held at The World Cup Cafe.

The following improvements seek to build on these events and provide a solid foundation for their expansion.

Near Northside Better Blocks project



Cultural Night in the Near Northside

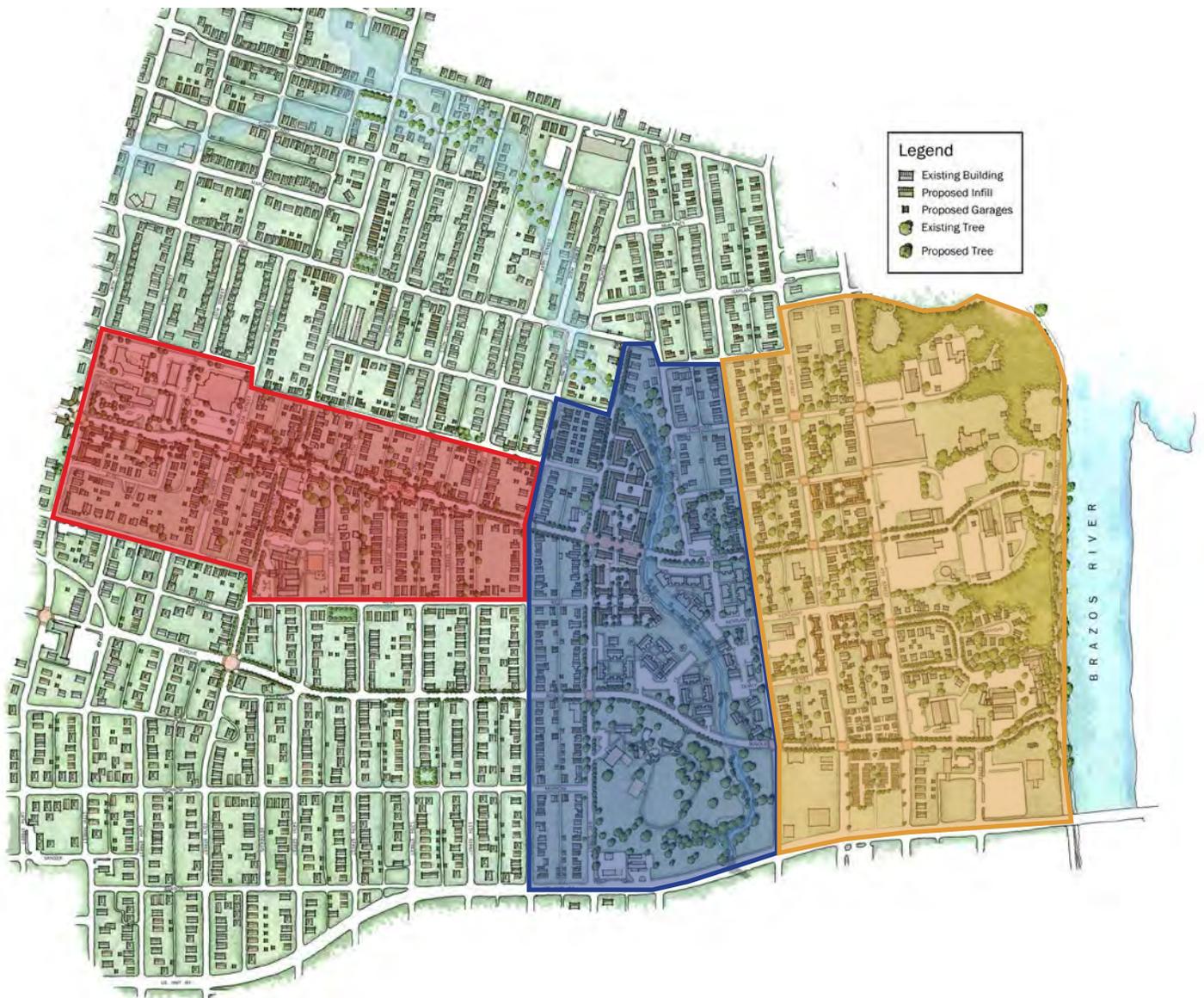


### Near Northside Catalyst Areas

Following our analysis of the neighborhood it became readily apparent that focusing revitalization efforts within three separate catalyst zones would provide the greatest return on investment for both the public and private sectors.

The three catalyst areas include the Colcord Catalyst Area (shaded red), Parkside Village Catalyst Area (shaded blue) and the Brazos River Catalyst Area (shaded yellow). These three areas represent the best opportunity to support significant redevelopment in the near term, whereas the remaining areas will continue to support long-term efforts to fill in vacant lots and rehab single family housing.

As will be discussed further on the following pages, it is anticipated the Colcord Catalyst Area will be comprised mostly of 2-3 story mixed use structures with retail on the ground floor and residential or office above. The Parkside Village Catalyst area will provide slightly more density and represents one of the best cases of near term redevelopments with the recent closure of the Parkside Village. Lastly the Brazos River Catalyst areas is anticipated to attract a denser urban neighborhood feel.



Colcord Catalyst Area



Parkside Village Catalyst Area



Brazos River Catalyst Area



### Near Northside Catalyst Area

The Colcord Catalyst area ranges from 18th street to 8th street and would focus on developing 2 to 3 story mixed use buildings with retail on the ground floor. There are very few parcels along Colcord that are owned by the same person or entity, so it is anticipated that growth along the street will be mostly organic in nature with multiple individual investors.

While this presents problems with developing parcels in a timely manner, it presents the opportunity to expand on the diversity that the neighborhood expressed support of.

All buildings and developments within the area should face the street and have interactive street elements such as front entrances along the main pedestrian passageways, clear glazing on the storefronts and outdoor seating. Additionally all new developments should be required to provide room for on street parking, sidewalks, street trees and compatible lighting. It will be of the utmost importance to keep all buildings within the area to a pedestrian scale to not only provide a pleasant experience for visitors and residents, but to also protect the existing neighborhood from incompatible land uses.



Example of the potential character of a new development along Colcord

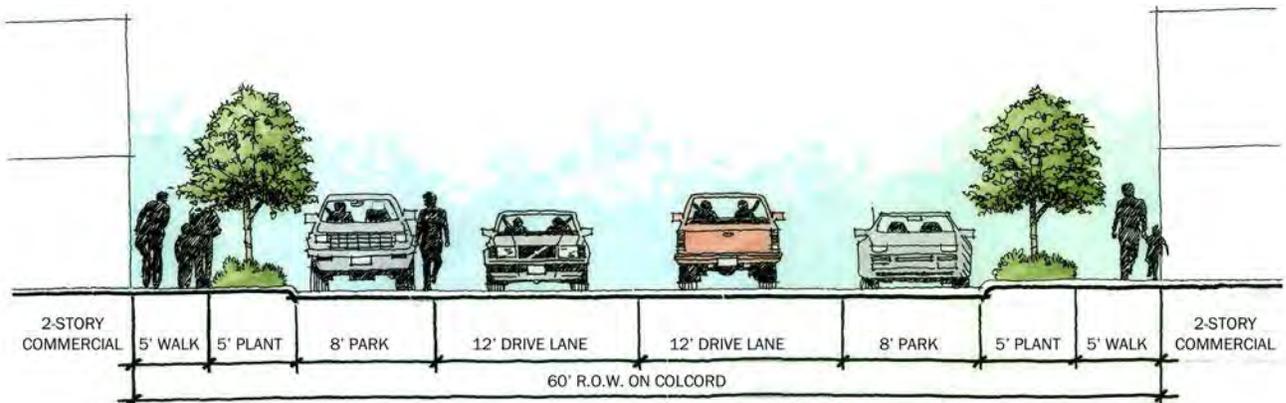


A positive example of a pedestrian friendly store front with clear glazing and pedestrian entrances



An example of an engaging streetscape with outdoor dining and trees as a barrier between pedestrians and automobile traffic

Cross Section of Colcord Avenue





**Legend**

-  Existing Building
-  Proposed Infill
-  Proposed Garages
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree

## Colcord Catalyst Area Public/Private Improvements

There are a number of improvements to be made within the Colcord Catalyst area that could contribute greatly to the pedestrian friendly atmosphere, and the sense of place with the potential to leverage private investment. (see map for location of recommended improvements)

Streetscape improvements throughout the neighborhood will be important to the continued revitalization of the area, but focusing initially on Colcord Avenue and 15th avenue will contribute to the development of the 15th and Colcord intersection as the community gathering place for the Near Northside. Improvements to portions of these main streets are already underway with infrastructure improvements at the intersection of 15th and Colcord and the subsequent lighting improvements that will be installed shortly after completion of the intersection improvements. Extending continuous sidewalks the entire length of Colcord in addition to adding street trees between the sidewalk and automobile travel lanes will also improve the pedestrian friendly nature of the area. As a note sidewalk and street trees should be required for all new developments along Colcord.

Intersection improvements will provide pedestrians and children an opportunity to safely cross Colcord at specific locations and will serve to slow traffic traveling through the area.

While the current flag-stop system is working well for the Waco Transit System, it can cause confusion for drivers and be inefficient if ridership increases. Adding a sheltered Bus Stop to the 15th and Colcord intersection as well as a bus pull-out lane near the community health center could provide increased safety for riders and help to keep the flow of traffic along Colcord adequate.

### Recommended Improvements

1. Streetscape Improvements ■
  - Colcord Avenue
    - Lighting (*Underway*)
    - Sidewalks
    - Street Trees
  - 15th Street
    - Lighting
    - Sidewalks
    - Street Trees
2. Intersection Improvements ●
  - 15th Street & Colcord Avenue (*Underway*)
  - 18th Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 16th/15a Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 13th Street & Colcord Avenue
3. Designated Bus stops/pull-out lanes ⬡
  - 15th and Colcord
  - Near 18th and Colcord at the Community Health Center
4. Neighborhood Gateway ■
  - 18th and Colcord



Positive example of pedestrian oriented streetscape



Intersection improvements should use a variety of methods to improve pedestrian safety similar to the image above



**Legend**

-  Existing Building
-  Proposed Infill
-  Proposed Garages
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree

### Parkside Village Catalyst Area

Where the Colcord Catalyst Area is focused on developing a retail oriented pedestrian friendly boulevard, the Parkside Village Catalyst Area has the ability to turn into a mixed use center with slightly higher density residential development and some retail.

The major focus for developing the desired character within the Parkside Village Catalyst area will be positively influencing the redevelopment of the Parkside Village Apartment complex. This 13+ acres site is one of the largest single owner contiguous pieces of land within the entire Near Northside and if developed with the correct character, could act as a catalyst for redevelopment throughout the region. The facility should be comprised of a mix of uses (retail & residential) with all buildings facing the street to encourage pedestrian activity. Additionally, the development should take advantage of the adjacent creek to provide visitors and residents with an additional amenity.

Additionally, it would be a positive for the community if the Parkside Village Parcel on the opposite side of 9th street (see adjacent map between Tennessee and Indiana) could be developed with single family homes or townhomes providing reduced density near single family properties.

The overall character of this catalyst area could become an urban neighborhood with compact pedestrian friendly housing and small scale retail.



Example of pedestrian friendly mixed-use building that would be ideal for the Parkside Village location



Example of the potential character of single family infill development



A typical pedestrian mixed-use retail and residential development



**Legend**

- Existing Building
- Proposed Infill
- Proposed Garages
- Existing Tree
- Proposed Tree

## Parkside Village Catalyst Area Public/Private Improvements

The Parkside Village Catalyst Area has three main thoroughfares that connect the region to Downtown, The Brazos River and the southwestern half of the Near Northside. These three main thoroughfares include Colcord, Bosque and 9th street. All three of these streets are recommended for streetscape improvements that would include street trees, continuous sidewalks, and new lighting to match the lighting that will be installed along Colcord.

Intersection improvements along Colcord and Bosque at the 9th and 6th street intersections will serve to unify the area while continuing the pedestrian connections established along Colcord. The connection along Colcord between the Brazos River and the greater Near Northside will act as a unifying element to draw both residents and visitors throughout the community.

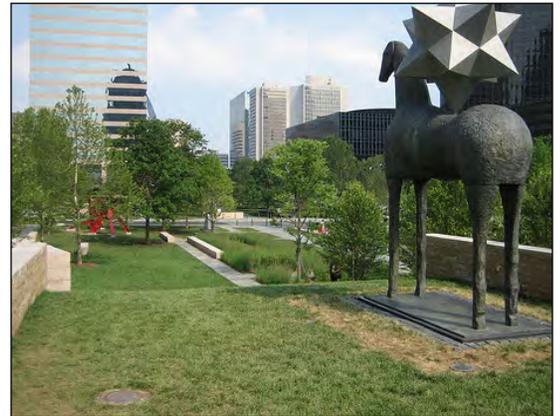
An important improvement that will need to be undertaken in conjunction with the redevelopment of Parkside Village is improvements to the flood plain/creek bed that runs throughout the catalyst area. This area could become an amenity to the entire neighborhood with a trail that connects to Dewey Park and the Brazos River Trail System.

With the understanding that Dewey Park has recently undergone a number of improvements including the addition of a splash pad, but additional improvements including streetscape improvements, additional pedestrian entrances as well as paved trails, and the potential addition of public art could serve to draw families and children into the interior of the large recreation area.

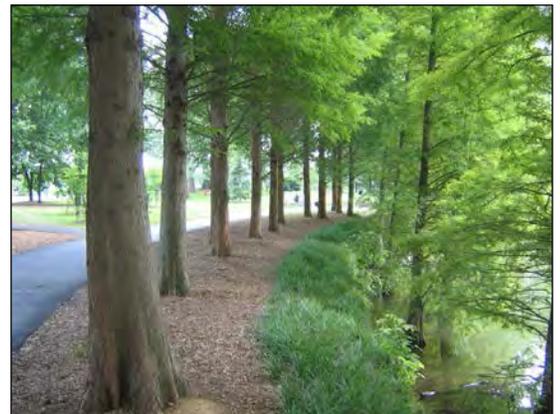
Lastly the addition of a bus stop at the intersection of 9th and Colcord would provide additional safety for residents and visitors.

### Recommended Improvements

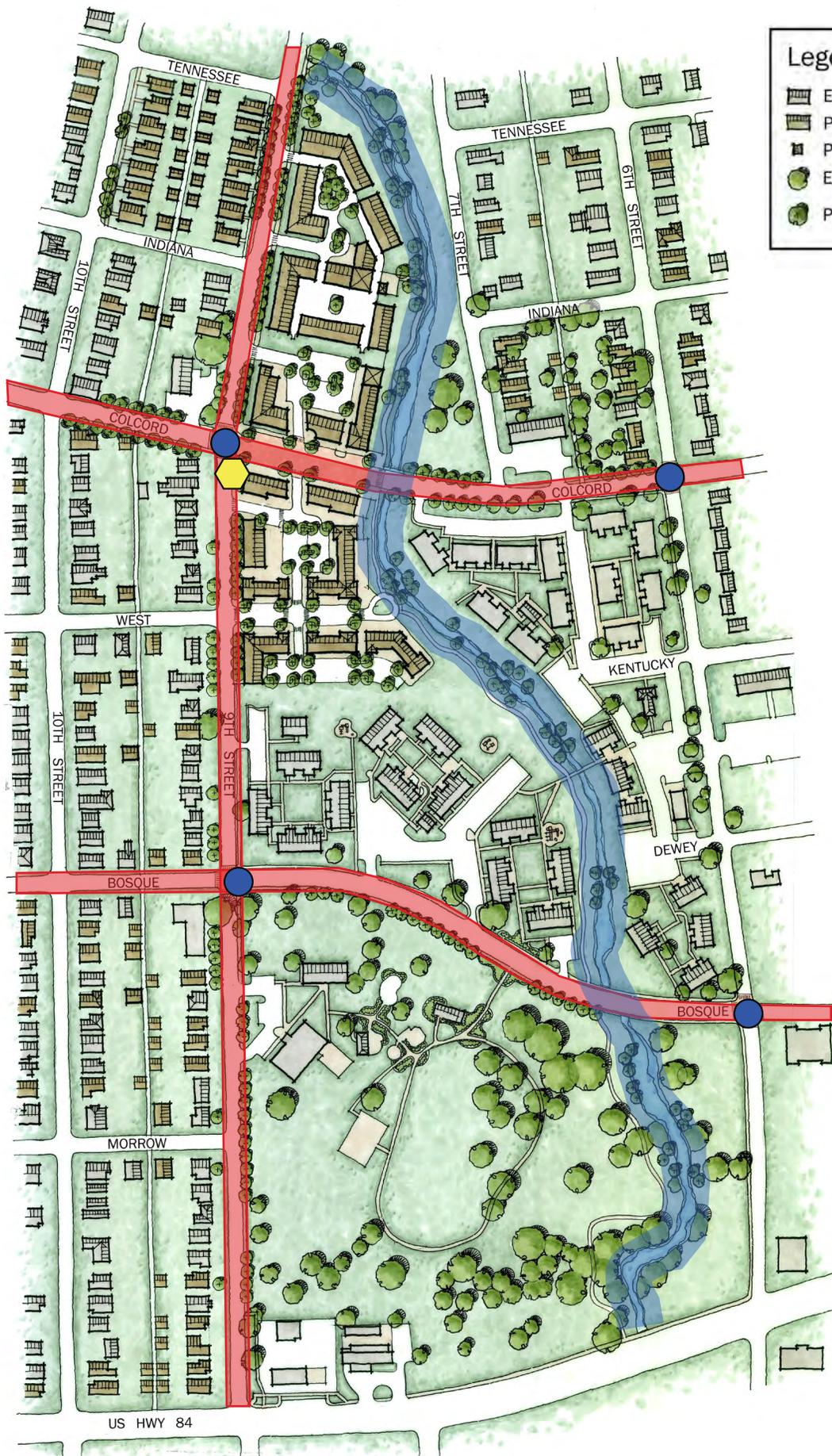
1. Streetscape Improvements ▭
  - Colcord Avenue
  - Bosque Boulevard
  - 9th Street
2. Intersection Improvements ●
  - 9th Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 9th Street & Bosque Boulevard
  - 6th Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 6th Street & Bosque Boulevard
3. Improvements to concrete lined channel behind parkside village apartments ▭
  - Addition of trail along the flood plain
4. Improvements to amenities at Dewey Park
  - Streetscape improvements including lighting and expanded sidewalks
  - Public Art
5. Transit Stop improvements ◈
  - 9th and Colcord Avenue



Example of public art in an urban park



Potential character of a linear park/trail along the flood plain



**Legend**

-  Existing Building
-  Proposed Infill
-  Proposed Garages
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree

**Brazos River Catalyst Area**

The Brazos River Catalyst Area is unique within the Near Northside as it is the only area that has a major thoroughfare running through it. The 4th & 5th street corridor is an east west corridor that takes people into and out of Downtown Waco and through to Baylor University.

The constant traffic flow along with numerous other factors has led to the demolition of the majority of homes that originally resided in between 4th and 5th street. This has created an opportunity to develop slightly higher density residential and commercial project due to the number of contiguous vacant parcels.

The large amount of vacant land is being taken advantage along Bosque where a new project is in the advanced planning stages and will include approximately 20 detached single family homes and 56 townhomes. The slightly higher residential density is a good fit for the area and its adjacency to downtown, on the far eastern edge of the Near Northside helps to provide a gateway into the neighborhood along a major through street.

North of 4th street there are two very different sections of land. The largest portion of land is occupied by City facilities and has a very industrial feel, while the other has a couple of meandering streets that lead to the river and the Dwyer Group offices. Within the area between 4th and the river there is relatively little room for development with the exception of vacant lots along the Marsha drive cul-de-sac.

With the addition of new single family developments and Townhomes south of 4th street and the potential redevelopment of the Marsha Drive cul-de-sac, the Brazos River catalyst area will become an extension of the urban neighborhood in the Parkside Village Catalyst Area, and will act as a gateway to the neighborhood from Downtown.



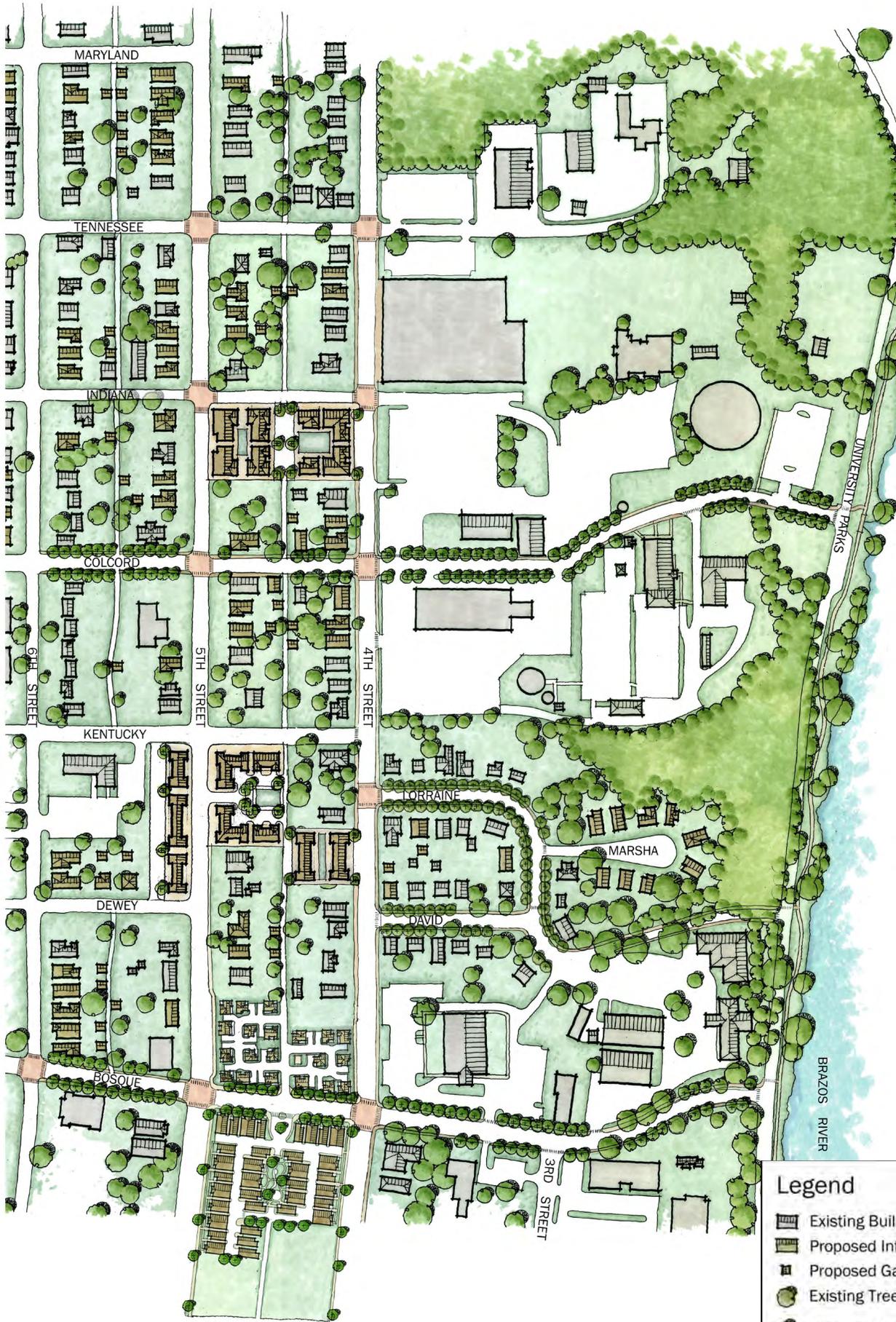
Example of three story urban townhome product



Example of high quality infill single family development



Example of mixed use building that would fit within the character of an urban neighborhood



**Legend**

-  Existing Building
-  Proposed Infill
-  Proposed Garages
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree

## Brazos River Catalyst Area Public/Private Improvements

The focus of the public/private improvements in the Brazos River Catalyst Area is the continuation of improvements along Colcord and Bosque. This important connection creates a linear pathway for pedestrians and cars to travel between the neighborhood and the river, which provides an additional link to one of the best amenities in the City of Waco. Additionally, David and Lorraine Drive should be a target of initial streetscape improvements as it provides a unique rural feel for property so close to Downtown. Similar to the previous catalyst areas, streetscape improvements should be comprised of continuous sidewalks, improved lighting and street trees. Improvements along David and Lorraine should take care to preserve the unique rural feel of the surrounding property.

Intersection improvements at the 4th and 5th street intersections with Colcord and Bosque that are an extension of the improvements along the length of the streets will serve to provide a uniform character to the neighborhood and instill a sense of place.

Currently the portion of Colcord street that cuts through the City owned property has a posted sign that states no through traffic. It would be ideal for the street to be opened entirely to through traffic, but if that is not possible for security reasons, a pedestrian corridor should be developed to allow foot traffic and bikes through to the river.

Gateways at the intersection of 5th and Colcord and 5th and Bosque will signify entrance to the larger Near Northside neighborhood and provide cars traveling to downtown with an understanding that they are traveling through a neighborhood.

Lastly, 4th and 5th street both have extremely wide lanes and on street parking. The entire area would benefit from the re-striping of the lanes to include smaller lanes with the addition of a bike lane. With a curb-to-curb measurement of ~44 feet re-striping could include two 11 foot travel lanes two 8 foot parking lanes and a 6 foot wide bike lane.

### Recommended Improvements

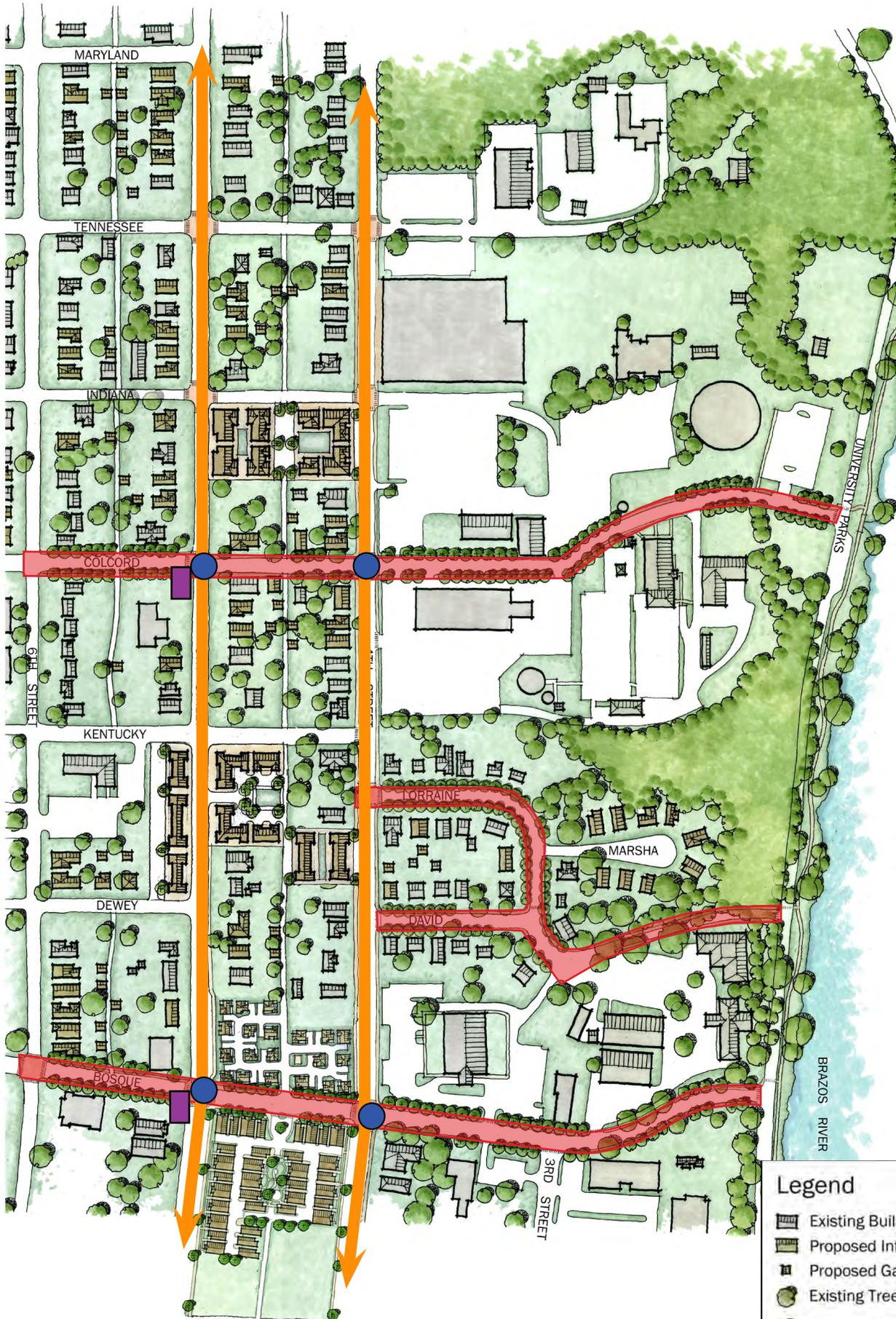
1. Streetscape Improvements ▬
  - Colcord Avenue
  - Bosque Boulevard
  - David Drive
  - Lorraine Drive
2. Intersection Improvements ●
  - 4th Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 4th Street & Bosque Boulevard
  - 5th Street & Colcord Avenue
  - 5th Street & Bosque Boulevard
3. Pedestrian Corridor along Colcord through City Owned Property
4. Neighborhood Gateway ▬
  - 5th and Colcord
  - 5th and Bosque
5. Re-striping of 4th and 5th Street ↔



Example of effective streetscape along a well traveled thoroughfare



Potential character of a linear park/trail along the flood plain



Legend	
	Existing Building
	Proposed Infill
	Proposed Garages
	Existing Tree
	Proposed Tree



# Near Northside Master Plan

---

## Implementation Strategies

### Strategy 1

Revise the local zoning to be more compatible with the neighborhood vision and current land use, and develop a set of development standards to guide future development.

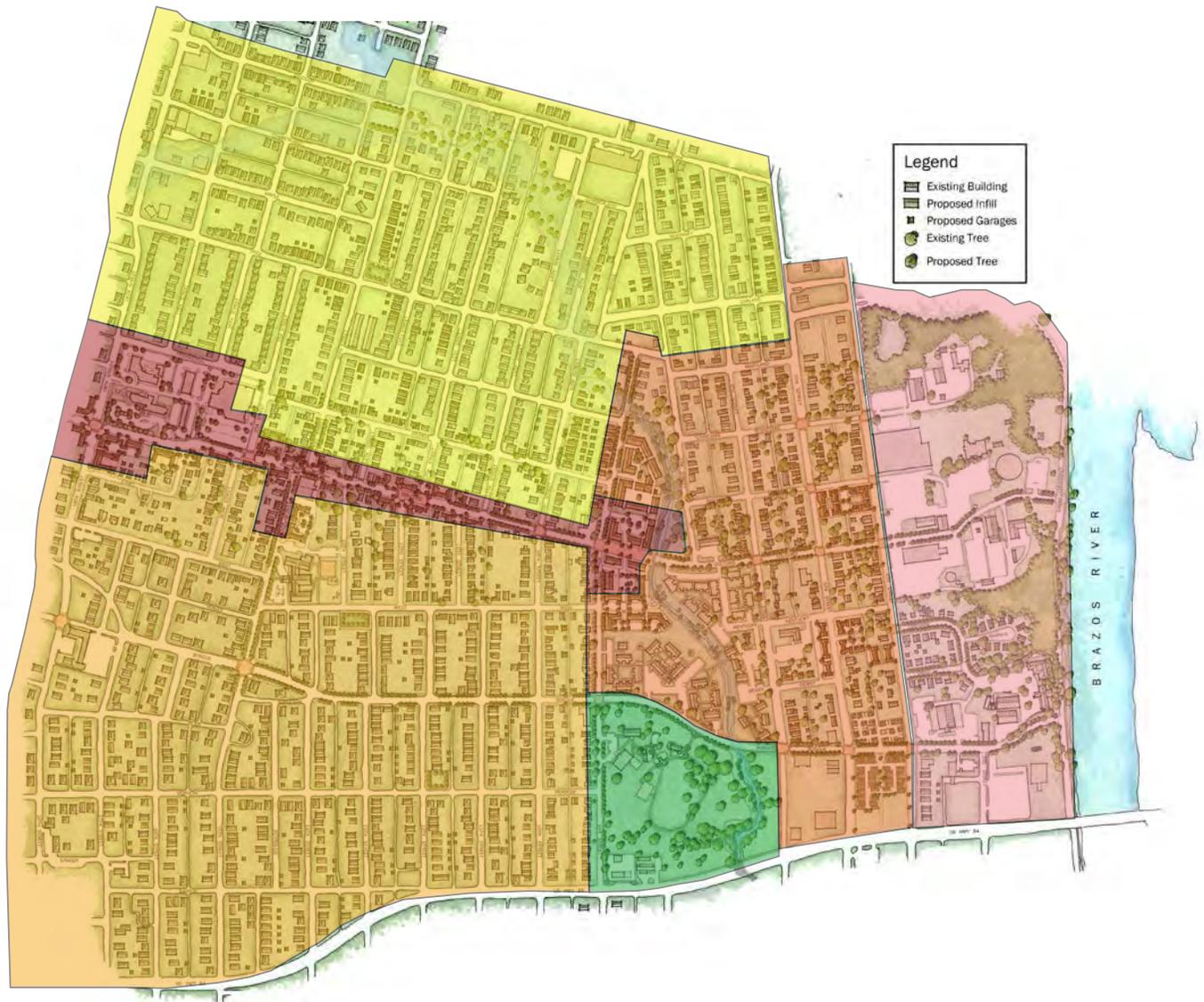
The Near Northside area is currently covered by a variety of zoning ranging from Light Industrial (M-2) to Single Family (R-1B). This zoning is rarely compatible with current land uses and does not mesh with the City’s or Community’s vision for the future of the area.

As part of the Greater Downtown Area it will be important to make sure that the new zoning is compatible with the vision developed in the Imagine Waco Greater Downtown Plan and with the local community’s vision for the revitalization of the area.

Shown below is a map of the new proposed zoning sections with an overview of what the character of the zones should look to the right.

The design standards should be applicable across all of the different zoning categories and be comprised of requirements for sidewalk improvements, landscaping, lighting, public plazas, public art, fencing, off street parking, architectural design, signange requirements etc...

The zoning categories would then be more specific setting rules for types of uses allowed, building setbacks, minimum heights and maximum heights





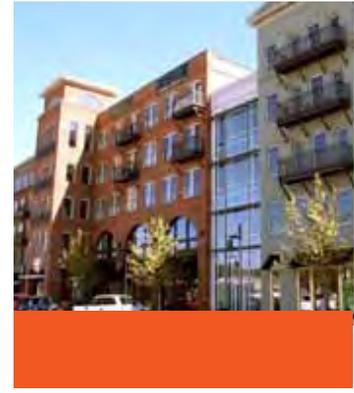
### MIXED-USE FLEX

Mixed-use flex is a mix of housing and employment with densities that are less intense than the core. Live/work units that support an emerging creative class are characteristic in this development type.



### MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL

Mixed-use commercial is walkable because of its mix of uses and interconnected street network. It may be a center, a main street, or integrated into a neighborhood that includes retail and office. Buildings include low-to medium-density mixed-use, retail, office, duplexes and townhouses.



### CITY NEIGHBORHOOD

City neighborhoods are typically the most compact type of neighborhood with mainly housing. These areas are walkable, easily accessible to transit and usually include a mix of apartments, condos and townhomes in both mixed-use and single-use buildings.



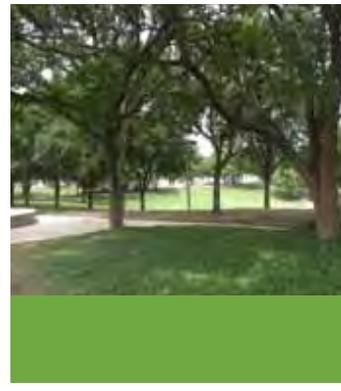
### TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Traditional neighborhoods include areas with single-family homes, townhomes and rowhouses which are relatively compact, walkable and transit-oriented.



### SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD

Single-family neighborhoods include a mix of single-family, detached homes and duplexes. Street networks can be typical of post-World War II suburbs or a more walkable grid.



### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and open space provides many different functions. There is a hierarchy of open space based on the neighborhood context. Open spaces will range from small, active, hardscape plazas in urban areas, to large regional parks and trail systems.

\* Land use descriptions taken from the Imagine Waco downtown master plan

## Strategy 2

Hire an individual to act as an advocate for the revitalization of the Near Northside area.

Initially working within the organizational structure of the Downtown Development Corporation, and individual should be retained to act as an advocate for the Near Northside area. As a condition of his/her employment it should be understood that the individual has a mandate to establish a self-funded 501-C3 non-profit corporation within three years. This arrangement would provide some of the initial funding and office support need to get the organization off the ground.

### Potential Near Northside Job Description

**Position Summary:** The President of the Near Northside 501-C3 and with the Waco Downtown Development Corporation. The President is responsible for the development and oversight of redevelopment initiatives within the Near Northside neighborhood.

#### Responsibilities:

##### Forming Partnerships

- Develop contacts and networks dependent on the economic opportunities.
- Facilitate partnerships between businesses, government, community interests, educational and financial institutions and the Near Northside.

##### Economic Development

- Identify and encourage new development
- Provide support and services by assisting owners, consultants, and governmental entities during the development process.
- Initiate and conduct discussions and negotiations with the private and public sectors regarding economic development initiatives.

##### Research

- Compile a detailed profile and demographic information to promote the Near Northside to potential developers.
- Compile and maintain an inventory of availability of land, buildings and other facilities conducive to the promotion of downtown business and residential development.

##### Marketing

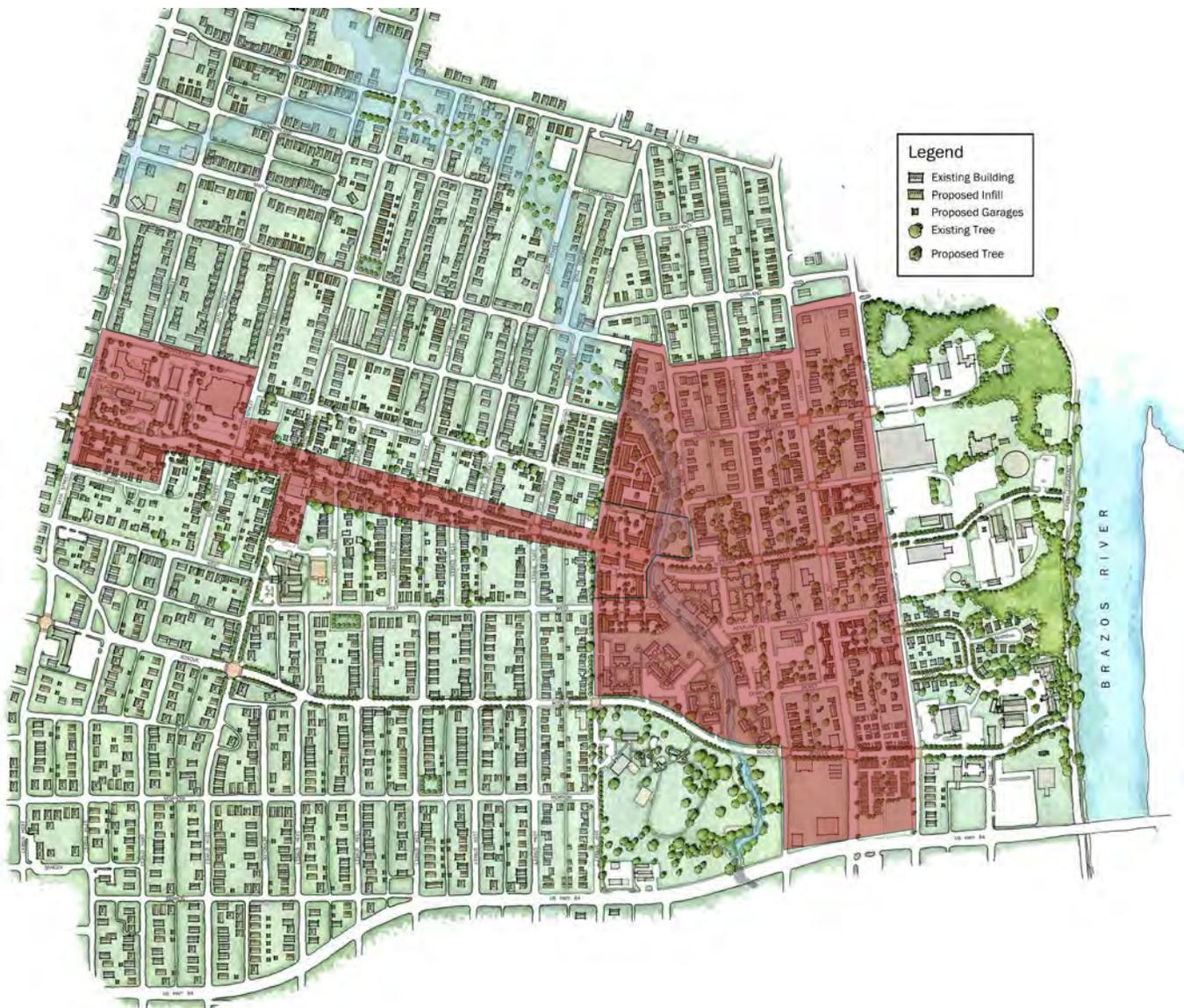
- Compile information for promotional literature.
- Answer inquiries from outside of the area using marketing packages.
- Promote the area using the Internet.
- Actively pursue leads and prospects which are a benefit to Center City of Waco

### Strategy 3

Create a detailed economic development incentive program for the region.

In addition to the Housing and Community Development Incentives available for residential development, the City should put in place a economic development grant program based on Chapter 380 of the local government code and work with the county to establish a grant program based on Chapter 381 of the local government code.

The foundation of this policy should be to rebate all of the City's incremental general fund sales tax and real property tax derived from new developments to individuals or corporations willing to build a project within the catalyst area shown below with a taxable value of over \$750,000. Additionally, the City should work with the County to establish a grant program to rebate all of the County portion of the real property taxes derived from the new development. The length of terms for the economic development agreements should range from 5 to 20 years depending on the economic impact of the project.



## Strategy 4

Work with partners to positively control the redevelopment of Parkside Village.

The redevelopment of the Parkside Village Apartment Complexes is of the utmost importance to revitalization efforts in the region. As illustrated earlier, the dramatic decrease in crime seen throughout the area following the close of the apartment complexes demonstrates the clear need for mixed-income housing in the region.

The City, Local Housing Authority and Key Stakeholders should put together a team to work with HUD and private investors to create a development that can kick start revitalization efforts.

Potential Plan for the Parkside Redevelopment



## Strategy 5

Develop a marketing campaign to promote the economic advantages, quality of life, current momentum and real estate opportunities within the Near Northside.

Creating a marketing/branding campaign would ideally be one of the first things that the newly hired Near Northside advocate would undertake. This would provide the region the opportunity to re-brand itself removing the “high-crime” monicker and illustrating the uniqueness and positive qualities of this downtown adjacent neighborhood.

The marketing campaign should include the development of a website for the neighborhood, a push to provide information about property to the local real estate community and regular visits with key stakeholders throughout the community to spread the word of the redevelopment efforts underway in the region.

### Initial steps to “Rebrand” the Near Northside

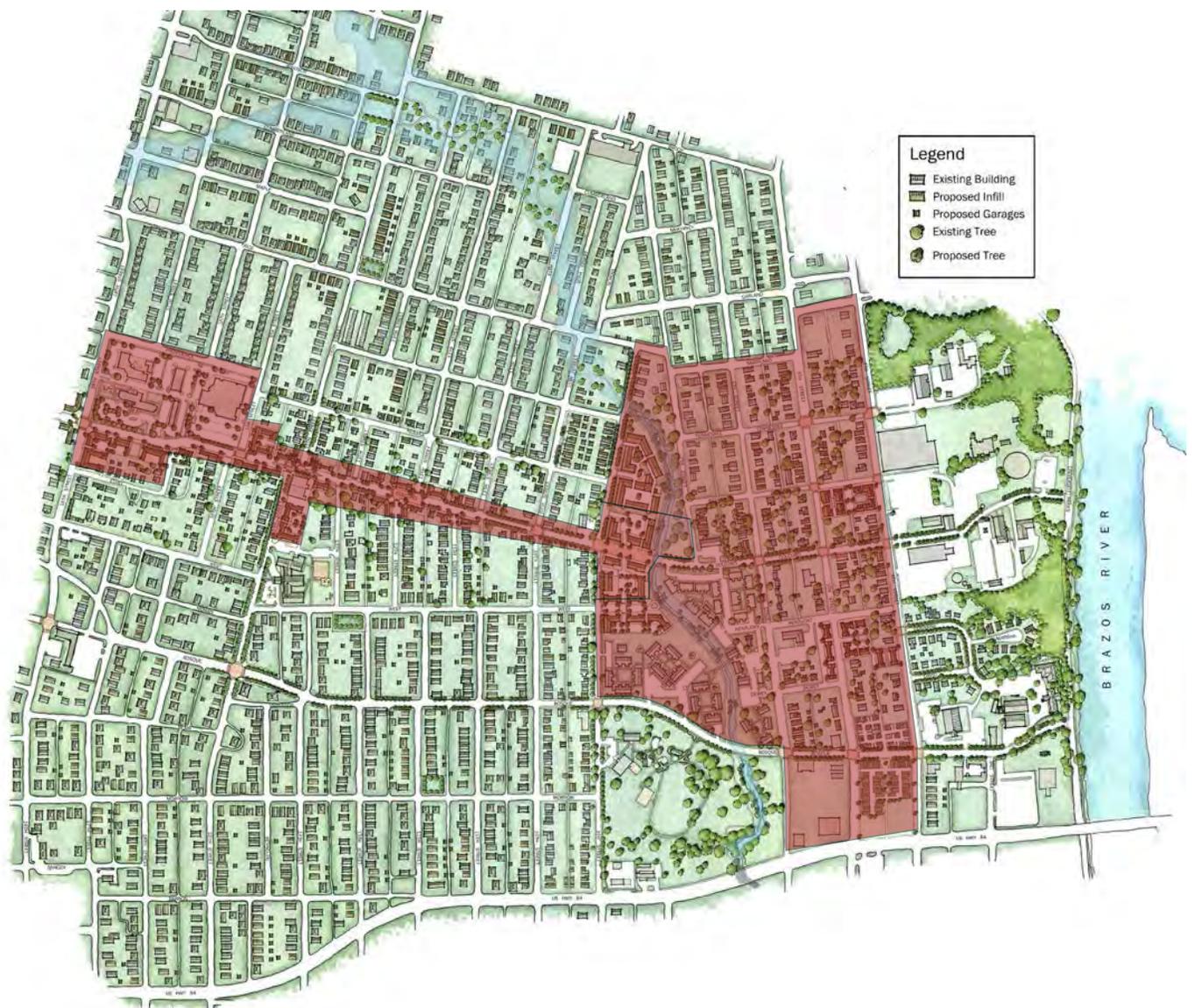
1. Identify and work with a local marketing firm to build on the community vision established during the SWOT Analysis and create a neighborhood brand and slogan. Ideally this would include creating a logo and color palette to use on all marketing materials and a slogan that reinforces the strengths of the community.
2. Develop a quality internet presence. Website hosting expenses are extremely low and there are a number of sites that are free including Facebook, Twitter and Google Blogger. This will be an important way to keep the community involved in what is happening in the Near Northside.
3. Provide a continuous stream of information. Providing weekly updates about progress being made towards the master plan, community events, stories from local businesses etc... will provide people with the chance to get to know the community. It is very important to continue to provide fresh content as followers will begin to fade over time with a lack of new stories or posts.
4. Lastly, continue to host community events such as the Better Block project and the Cultural Night at World Cup Cafe. It would also be nice to be able to hold an event within Dewey Park as it is such a large space it could easily handle a significant number of people.

## Strategy 6

Work with the anticipated Downtown Development Corporation to assemble and sell property at key catalyst locations within the neighborhood.

Urban revitalization and urban infill development are often some of the riskiest investments possible within the real estate market due to high costs and fragmented ownership. If the DDC can work with the Near Northside to assemble and sell property at key locations, they could help to jump-start redevelopment opportunities in the area. Shown below are some key target areas for redevelopment.

### Key Catalyst Zones



## Strategy 7

Continue the City’s Housing and Community Development Incentive policies to encourage reinvestment in the area and determine strategies to further promote the programs in conjunction with the neighborhood marketing plan.

To encourage private investment within catalyst areas, vacant city owned land near the 15th and Colcord intersection should be selected as highly desirable sights and promoted as such. Promotion opportunities could include everything from advertising “Free Land” or the incentive policies on signs placed on vacant lots to actively marketing the properties to the local real estate community.

### Current Waco Housing and Community Development Incentive Policies

#### City Owned Lot Program

##### Purpose:

- To provide affordable housing through the sale of selected City-owned lots for future homeowners intending to build a home and occupy it as their primary residence.

##### Benefits:

- City-owned lots can be purchased from the City of Waco for the higher of court costs or \$100.00.
- City of Waco Trustee properties can be purchased to build a homestead regardless of income.

#### Infill Development Program

##### Purpose:

- To provide incentives for builders and homebuyers to purchase privately held residential infill lots to build quality homes within the City of Waco to be used as a primary residence.

##### Benefits:

- No income cap
- Waiver of City liens as well as permit and tap fees

#### Demolition Grant Program

##### Purpose:

- To provide incentives for builders and homebuyers seeking to purchase existing homes deemed uninhabitable (green- or red-tagged) to replace them with quality homes to be used as a primary residence.

##### Benefits:

- Up to a \$3,500 grant (per structure) for the demolition of green-tagged structures and privately-owned red-tagged structures
- Waiver of City liens and disposal fees as well as construction-related fees
- No income cap

#### Interim Construction Program

##### Purpose:

- The interim construction program is designed to provide low-interest short-term loans to builders for the construction of single family homes for low-income home buyers to be used as their primary residence.

##### Benefits:

- Short-term construction loan (6 months) with an interest rate of 3% or less

#### Tax Abatement Program

##### Purpose:

- To provide property tax incentives for future homeowners intending to build their homestead, purchase an existing home for their primary residence, or repair their existing primary residence within the City of Waco Reinvestment Zone (RZ).

##### Benefits:

- Seven (7) year abatement of property taxes due for properties valued at \$90,000 and above (new construction) and improvements valued at \$30,000 or above (rehabilitation)
- No income cap